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Title: Regarding the condition of ailing Ms. Laxmi Panda, a freedom fighter and member of Indian National Army.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Sir, I draw attention of this House to an urgent matter of public importance. As the Minister concerned is also present here in this House, I draw his attention also.

Countless ordinary Indians sacrificed much for Independence without a thought for reward. As the nation celebrates 60th anniversary of her Independence, much of that generation has died out. The number of freedom fighters is rapidly dwindling. Most of them are very old and several are ailing or are otherwise in distress. Lakshmi Indira Panda is one of the countless rural Indians who fought for the country's freedom as ordinary people who did not go on to become famous as leaders, as Ministers or as Governors. She is one amongst many, just as people who sacrificed a great deal and then went back to their everyday life after Independence. Most of that generation has died out. The few who remain are in their late 80s or 90s.

Orissa State Government has recognised Lakshmi Indira Panda as a freedom fighter which entitles her to a meagre monthly pension of Rs. 700 and another Rs. 300 have been added from last year. However, Freedom Fighter Samman status has been denied to her by the Government of India despite several Indian National Army veterans/legendaries having recommended her case to the Government.

Lakshmi Indira Panda's parents were killed in Burma by the British bombing. She joined INA when Netaji arrived there. She joined the struggle and was a companion of Lt. Janaki and Lakshmi Sehgal, Gouri and other famous INA fighters.[\[s89\]](#)

The tragedy is since 1951, she has worked variously as a store labourer, labourer, as a domestic servant, always for a pittance. She has never asked for State help. It was only recently when the media brought the pitiable condition of Lakshmi Panda to light, only then, the State Government acted. Her application was forwarded by the State Government to the Centre, and two years have already passed. I would request the Government to take a decision in this regard because she has already said that she would again come to Delhi with the slogan 'Delhi Chalo'. Before she arrives and knocks at the doors of the hon. Minister, I would request him to take suitable action.